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STATE FOR INL JOHN LYLE
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SUBJECT: 2008-2009 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT
(INCSR) PART I, DRUGS AND CHEMICAL CONTROL

REF: STATE 100989

11. (U) Per reftel instructions, Post submits its draft 2008-2009 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Part I - Drug and Chemical Control.

12. (SBU) Begin Text:

1I. Summary

The Government of Singapore (GOS) enforces stringent counter-narcotics policies through strict laws -- including the death penalty and corporal punishment -- vigorous law enforcement, and active prevention programs. Singapore is not a producer of precursor chemicals or narcotics, but as a major regional financial and transportation center it is potentially an attractive target for money launderers and those engaged in drug transshipment. Singapore is widely recognized as one of the least corrupt countries in the world. Corruption cases involving Singapore's counter-narcotics and law enforcement agencies are rare, and their officers regularly attend U.S.-sponsored training programs as well as regional forums on drug control. Singapore is a party to the 1988 United Nations Drug Convention.

II. Status of Country

In 2007, there was no known production of illicit narcotics or precursor chemicals in Singapore. While Singapore itself is not a known transit point for illicit drugs or precursor chemicals, it is one of the busiest transshipment ports in the world. The sheer volume of cargo passing through makes it likely that some illicit shipments of drugs and chemicals move undetected. With few exceptions, Singapore does not screen containerized shipments unless they enter its customs territory. Neither Singapore Customs nor the Immigration and Checkpoint Authority (ICA) keep data on in-transit or transshipped cargo unless there is a Singapore consignee involved in the shipment.

According to GOS figures, in 2007 authorities arrested 2,166 drug abusers, compared to 1,218 arrests in 2006. Importantly, the increase in arrests by the GOS most likely does not represent an increase in narcotics trafficking, but rather the result of an August 2006 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) that added buprenorphine hydrochloride, the active ingredient in the opiate Subutex, as a Class A controlled drug, and subsequent enforcement action by the Singapore Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB). According to GOS statistics, in 2007 the number of first-time drug offenders increased from 477 arrests in 2006 to 520 arrests in 2007. In 2007 repeat drug offenders also increased with 1,661 arrested, compared to 741 arrested in 2006. Similarly, and consistent with previous

years, abusers of synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine, MDMA, Erimin-5 buprenorphine hydrochloride and nimetazepam, comprise 63 percent of total drug abusers. The most significant increase is registered in the number of heroin abusers. In 2006 heroin offenders accounted for only 9.7 percent of total drug abusers, but this increased to 31 percent of total drug abusers in 2007. Conversely, decreases were observed in the number of MDMA, Ketamine and Nimetazepam abusers in 2007.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs in 2007

Policy Initiatives

Singapore continues to pursue a strategy of demand and supply reduction for drugs. The GOS has worked closely with numerous international groups dedicated to drug education, including the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. In addition to arresting drug traffickers, Singapore focuses on arresting and detaining drug abusers for treatment and rehabilitation, providing drug detoxification and rehabilitation, and offering vigorous drug education in its schools. Singaporean citizens and permanent residents are subject to random drug tests. The Misuse of Drugs Act gives the Singapore Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) the authority to commit drug abusers to rehabilitation centers for mandatory treatment and rehabilitation. Since 1999, individuals testing positive for consumption of narcotics have been held accountable for narcotics consumed abroad as well as in Singapore.

Singapore has continued efforts to curb synthetic drug abuse, of which Ketamine is the most prevalent. Amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act in 2006 designated Ketamine as a Class A Controlled Drug

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and increased penalties for trafficking accordingly. An individual in possession of more than 113g of Ketamine is presumed to be trafficking in the drug and can face maximum penalties of 20 years imprisonment and 15 strokes of the cane.

Additional amendments to the Misuse of Drugs Act also established long term imprisonment penalties for repeat synthetic drug abusers. Those arrested for a third time are subject to up to seven years imprisonment and seven strokes of the cane, and up to 13 years imprisonment and 12 strokes of the cane for subsequent offenses. Singapore's long term imprisonment regime, first introduced in 1998, is considered a contributing factor in curbing the country's heroin use.

The Misuse of Drugs Act now classifies buprenorphine, the active ingredient in Subutex, as a Class A Controlled Drug. Unless dispensed by a licensed physician or practitioner, the importation, distribution, possession and consumption of Subutex is a felony offense. Subutex, first introduced by the Ministry of Health in 2000, is a heroin substitute clinically used in the detoxification/rehabilitation of heroin addicts. Drug abusers were found to be abusing Subutex by mixing it with other drugs, mainly Dormicum, a prescription sleeping pill. Buprenorphine was the most commonly abused drug in Singapore in 2006, involved in more than one-third of total narcotics offenses.

Law Enforcement Efforts

As noted above, arrests for drug-related offenses increased 43.7 percent, from 1,218 arrests in 2006 to 2,166 arrests in 2007, a reflection of new enforcement measures under the amended Misuse of Drugs Act. These statistics include persons arrested for trafficking, possession, and consumption of illegal drugs. The majority of drug-related arrests in 2007 were of abusers of buprenorphine, at 38 percent, followed by heroin at 31 percent. Abuse of synthetic drugs including Ecstasy, methamphetamine, Ketamine and nimetazepam accounted for 26 percent of drug arrests. Singapore recorded no cocaine-related seizures or arrests in 2007. Of the total arrests, 520 involved new drug abusers.

In 2007, authorities executed 31 major enforcement operations which

dismantled 27 drug syndicates. A majority of these arrests were conducted during sweeps of drug distribution groups, which were infiltrated by undercover Singapore narcotics officers. CNB officers frequently perform undercover work, purchasing small, personal-use amounts of narcotics from generally low and mid-level traffickers and drug abusers. These sweeps often produce additional arrests when subjects present at arrest scenes test positive for narcotics in their system.

Singapore's CNB seized the following quantities of narcotics in 2007: 17.2 kg of heroin; 30.3 kg of cannabis; 7,029 tablets of MDMA; 1.48 kg of crystal Methamphetamine; 518 tablets of tablet Methamphetamine; 4.6 kg of Ketamine; 24,881 Nimetazepam tablets; and 3,435 buprenorphine tablets.

Corruption

Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) actively investigates allegations of corruption at all levels of government. Neither the government nor any senior government official is believed to engage in, encourage or facilitate the production or distribution of narcotics or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. The CNB is charged with the enforcement of Singapore's counter narcotics laws. Its officers and other elements of the Singapore Police Force are well-trained professional investigators.

Agreements and Treaties

Singapore is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1972 Protocol amending the Single Convention, and the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Singapore and the United States continue to cooperate in extradition matters under the colonial-era 1931 U.S.-UK Extradition Treaty. Singapore and the United States signed a Drug Designation Agreement (DDA) in November 2000, a mutual legal assistance agreement limited to drug cases. Singapore has signed mutual legal assistance agreements with Hong Kong and ASEAN. The

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United States and Singapore have held discussions on a possible bilateral Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), most recently in December 2005, although there have been no formal negotiations since 2004. Singapore has signed, but has not ratified, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the UN Corruption Convention. In April 2006, Singapore amended domestic legislation to allow for mutual legal assistance cooperation with countries with which they do not have a bilateral treaty.

Cultivation/Production

There was no known cultivation or production of narcotics in Singapore in 2007.

Drug Flow/Transit

Singapore is one of the busiest seaports in the world. Approximately 80 percent of the goods flowing through its port are in transit or are transshipped and do not enter Singapore's customs area. Similarly, the Port of Singapore is the second largest transshipment port in the world for cargo containers destined for the United States. According to GOS statistics during 2007, at the maritime Port of Singapore shipping tonnage reached 1,459 million gross tons (GT). This represents an increase of 11 percent from the 1,315 million GT record set in 2006. Given the extraordinary volume of cargo shipped through the port, it is highly likely that some of it contains illicit materials, although Singapore is not a known transit point for illicit drugs or precursor chemicals. Singapore does not require shipping lines to submit data on the declared contents of transshipment or transit cargo unless there is a Singapore consignee to the transaction. The lack of such information creates enforcement challenges. Singapore Customs

authorities rely on intelligence to uncover and interdict illegal shipments. They reported no seizures of transshipped cargoes involving illicit narcotics shipments in 2007. GOS officials have been reluctant to impose tighter reporting or inspection requirements at the port, citing concerns that inspections could interfere with the free flow of goods, jeopardizing Singapore's position as the region's primary transshipment port.

However, Singapore has increased its scrutiny of shipped goods, primarily as part of an enhanced posture to combat terrorism and control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their precursors. Singapore became the first Asian port to join the Container Security Initiative (CSI) in 2003, under which U.S. Customs personnel prescreen U.S.-bound cargo. Singapore also participates in other counterterrorism-related programs such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Megaports Initiative. Singapore's export control law went into effect in 2003, and it is implementing an expanded strategic goods control list that took effect in January 2008. While these initiatives aim to prevent WMD from entering the United States, the increased scrutiny and information they generate could also aid drug interdiction efforts.

Singapore is a major regional aviation hub. In 2007, Changi International Airport handled 36.7 million passengers, a 4.8 percent increase over 2006 figures. The Changi Airfreight Center is one of the world's busiest and operates as a Free Trade Zone where companies can move, consolidate, store or repack cargo without the need for documentation or customs duties.

Domestic Programs (Demand Reduction)

Singapore uses a combination of punishment and rehabilitation against first-time drug offenders. Rehabilitation of drug abusers typically occurs during incarceration. The government may detain addicts for rehabilitation for up to three years. Similarly, under Singapore's "three strikes" laws, third-time convicted drug offenders are subject to a minimum of five years imprisonment and three strokes of the cane. In an effort to discourage drug use during travel abroad, CNB officers may require urinalysis tests for Singapore citizens and permanent residents returning from outside the country. Those who test positive are treated as if they had consumed the illegal drug in Singapore.

Adopting the theme, "Prevention: The Best Remedy," Singapore authorities organize sporting events, concerts, plays, and other activities to reach out to all segments of society on drug prevention. Drug treatment centers, halfway houses, and job

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placement programs exist to help addicts reintegrate into society. At the same time, the GOS has toughened anti-recidivist laws. Three-time offenders face long mandatory sentences and caning. Depending on the quantity of drugs involved, convicted drug traffickers may be subject to the death penalty, regardless of nationality.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives

Bilateral Cooperation

Singapore and the United States enjoy good law enforcement cooperation, in particular under the Drug Designation Agreement. In 2007, approximately 45 GOS law enforcement officials attended training courses at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok on a variety of transnational crime topics. The GOS has cooperated with the United States and other countries in the forfeiture of drug-related proceeds discovered in Singapore banks, including the equitable sharing of seized and forfeited drug-related funds with the United States.

Road Ahead

The United States will continue to work closely with Singapore

authorities on all narcotics trafficking and related matters. Increased customs cooperation under CSI and other initiatives will help further strengthen law enforcement cooperation.

IV. Chemical Control

Singapore was the largest non-U.S. importer of ephedrine, a precursor for methamphetamine, in 2005 (latest available data) and the third-largest non-U.S. exporter. The quantities not re-exported are used primarily by the domestic pharmaceutical industry. Singapore is one of the largest distributors of acetic anhydride in Asia. Used in film processing and the manufacture of plastics, pharmaceuticals, and industrial chemicals, acetic anhydride is also the primary acetylating agent for heroin. Singapore participates in multilateral precursor chemical control programs, including Operation Purple, Operation Topaz, and Operation Prism, and is involved in law enforcement initiatives developed under these projects to halt worldwide diversion of precursors to illicit chemical trafficking and drug manufacturing organizations. The CNB works closely with the DEA office in Singapore to track the import of precursor chemicals for legitimate processing and use in Singapore. CNB's precursor unit monitors and investigates any suspected domestic diversion of precursors for illicit use. Singapore is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention and controls precursor chemicals, including pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, in accordance with its provisions. It will not authorize imports of precursors until it has issued a "No Objection" letter in response to the exporting country's pre-export notification. Pre-export notifications are issued on all exports; transshipment cases are treated as an import followed by an export. The GOS conducts rigorous site visits on companies dealing with controlled chemicals to ensure awareness of the requirements and overall compliance.

SHIELDS